

INTERVIEW SUMMARY:

The Applicant acknowledges with appreciation Examiner Melody Burch providing an Examiner Interview on 5 January 2011 with Applicant's representative Richard Eldredge.

In the Examiner Interview, the claims were discussed in relation to the cited references, namely, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,788,372 (Jones) and 2,774,553 (Jensen) and U.S. Publication No. 2006/0162778 (Nichols).

Mr. Eldredge stated that the switchable valve, as found in Claims 1, 11, and 20, is not shown in Figure 4 of Jones, as cited in the Office Action. Mr. Eldredge explained that Jones' coupler 20f includes a passage disposed therein which is not adapted to selectively close and open the primary passage. In response, Examiner Burch referred to Figure 1b of Jones, which shows the coupler closing the primary passage.

Mr. Eldredge proposed amending the claims to include a rotary switchable valve as found in Figure 7 of the drawings. Examiner Burch stated that such features would be obvious.

Mr. Eldredge explained that Jones discloses a passive valve, while the present invention is directed to an active valve, wherein a pilot or a control system selectively opens and closes the passage via a switch. Mr. Eldredge proposed amending Claims 1, 11, and 20 to further distinguish the present invention over Jones by including a switchable valve electrically operated via a switch. In response, Examiner Burch stated that Nichols discloses the proposed amendments and that it would be obvious to combine Nichols with Jones to arrive at the claimed invention.

Mr. Eldredge proposed further amending the claims to include the secondary passage. Examiner Burch stated that Jensen teaches a secondary passage and two opposing relief passages and that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Jensen with Jones to arrive at the claimed invention.

Agreement was not reached whether the proposed amendments would overcome the cited references found in the present Office Action.